

# Minority Health Facts

## IN RHODE ISLAND



### INTRODUCTION

This report provides information about major health indicators in the racial and ethnic minority populations of Rhode Island defined by the Office of Management and Budget (Directive 15) as:

- African American/Black: A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- Asian and Pacific Islander (API): A person having origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.
- Hispanic/Latino: A person of Mexican, Puerto-Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture regardless of race.
- Native American/American Indian: A person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural affiliation through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

This report presents data on socio-economic characteristics, morbidity and mortality, behavioral risks, infectious diseases, maternal and child health, and access to care among Rhode Island's racial and ethnic minority populations in comparison to the overall state population. Please note that race and ethnic status for some Health Department data sets are based on self-identification.

### POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Rhode Island is becoming increasingly diverse. From 1990 to 2000, Rhode Island's minority population increased by 77% while the White (non-Hispanic) population decreased by 3%. Today, 18% of the state population is a racial or ethnic minority. In general, the median age of Rhode Island's minority population is lower than the median age for the overall state population (36.7 years), and a larger percentage of the minority population is over the age of 50 as compared to the overall state population (70%).

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census:

- There are 90,820 Hispanics living in Rhode Island, making this group the largest and one of the most diverse minority populations in the state (8.7%). Persons of Puerto Rican origin form the largest Hispanic population in Rhode Island, followed by Dominicans and Colombians. Nearly 98% of Hispanics live in urban areas with the largest concentration of Hispanics living in Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls. Approximately 39% of Hispanics in Rhode Island over the age of 5 speak a language other than English in their homes (usually Spanish). The median age for the Hispanic/Latino population is 23.6 years, and nearly 90% of the Hispanic/Latino population is under the age of 50.



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The following are socio-economic characteristics of Rhode Island's minority populations from the 2000 Census. These characteristics may affect the health of the minority populations living in Rhode Island.

- There are four times as many Native Americans living below poverty level as the state's overall population.
- African Americans have a higher unemployment rate than all other minority groups and the overall state population.
- The median household income for Native Americans is \$22,813, approximately \$19,000 less than the state median and less than the median for all other minority groups.
- Fewer Native Americans graduate from high school than all other minority groups and the overall state population.

## POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS (Continued)

- There are 46,908 African Americans in Rhode Island, making this group the second largest minority population in the state (4.5%). Nearly 99% of African Americans in the state live in urban areas. The median age for the African American population is 26.8 years, and nearly 85% of the African American population is under the age of 50.
- There are 24,232 Asian and Pacific Islanders living in Rhode Island. Approximately 2.3% of the Rhode Island population is of Asian descent and about 0.1% is of Pacific Islander descent. Forty-five percent (45%) of the Asian and Pacific Islander population in RI was born in a foreign country. The median age for the Asian American population is 26.6 years, and over 85% of the Asian American population is under the age of 50.
- There are 5,121 Native Americans living in Rhode Island, consisting primarily of the members of the Narragansett Indian tribe (0.5%). Over 60% of the urban Native American population lives in Providence County. The median age for the Native American population is 26.3 years, and over 80% of the Native American population is under the age of 50.

**Table A: Socio-Economic Data**

	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/ LATINO	STATE
Percent of population living below poverty*	39.0	30.0	22.0	36.0	11.9
Percent of population that is unemployed*	6.5	7.5	4.6	6.9	3.6
Median household income*	\$22.8k	\$25.0k	\$36.5k	\$22.9k	\$42.1k
High school graduation rate** (percent)	62.0	71.0	81.0	66.0	81.0

SOURCES: \*U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000. \*\*RI Kids Count Factbook, 2004.

# BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTORS

- The Hispanic population participates less in physical activity than all other minority groups and the overall state population.
- Compared to the state and all other minority groups, African Americans have the highest percentage of adults who are overweight while the Native Americans have the highest percentage of adults who are obese. Asian and Pacific Islanders have the lowest rates of both overweight and obesity (lower than the state average).
- Fewer African Americans consume fruits and vegetables than all other minority groups and the overall state population. Native Americans have the highest percentage (higher than the state average) of fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Twice as many Native Americans smoke cigarettes (highest percentage among minority populations) as the overall state population, while the percentage of Hispanics who smoke is lower than the state average.
- One and half times more Native Americans engage in binge-drinking than the overall state population. This percentage is the highest of the racial and ethnic populations. Both African Americans and Hispanics have lower rates of binge-drinking than the state average.



Table B: Indicators of Behavioral Risk Factors

	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/ LATINO	STATE
Percent of adult population <sup>1</sup> that participates in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day	+	26.5	34.9	24.1	36.9
Percent of adult population that is overweight <sup>2</sup> (20 yrs+)	61.0	65.2	33.4	62.6	56.9
Percent of adult population that is obese <sup>3</sup> (20 yrs+)	31.6	28.8	4.8	21.3	18.4
Percent of adult population that consumes at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables per day	31.7	22.6	25.9	23.5	28.2
Percent of adult population that smokes cigarettes	52.3	26.1	25.7	16.7	23.0
Percent of adult population that consumed 5+ drinks on one or more occasions in past month (binge-drinking)	27.1	14.6	17.7	13.8	16.9

SOURCE: RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2000, Healthy People 2010 (2000-03 frequencies).

<sup>1</sup>Adult population refers to individuals 18 years and older unless otherwise specified.

<sup>2</sup>Overweight defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 25.

<sup>3</sup>Obesity defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 30.

+Data too small for meaningful analysis.



**Table C: Leading Causes of Death, 1999-2002**

#	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/LATINO	STATE
1	Heart Disease	Heart Disease	Heart Disease	Cancer	Heart Disease
2	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer	Heart Disease	Cancer
3	Diabetes	Stroke	Stroke	Homicide	Stroke
4	+	Diabetes	Unintentional injuries	Unintentional injuries	Chronic respiratory diseases
5	+	Unintentional injuries	Chronic respiratory diseases	Stroke	Pneumonia/influenza

SOURCE: RI Dept. of Health, Division of Vital Records, RI Resident Deaths, ICD-10 Codes, 1999-2002.  
+Data too small for meaningful analysis.

**Table D: Incidence Rates of Infectious Diseases: Cases per 100,000 Population**

	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/LATINO	STATE
Gonorrhea*	+	849.0	43.0	238.0	93.0
Chlamydia*	+	1846.0	465.0	1108.0	286.0
Tuberculosis**	0	21.5	38.4	14.3	4.4
HIV/AIDS***	+	114.5	+	44.0	12.8

SOURCES: RI Dept. of Health, Office of Communicable Diseases,  
\*Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Surveillance Data 2003.  
\*\*Tuberculosis Database 2003.  
\*\*\*RI Epidemiologic Profile of HIV/AIDS 2002.  
+Data too small for meaningful analysis.

## MORTALITY

- The top five causes of death in the overall state population are heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases and pneumonia/influenza. For the racial and ethnic minority populations, diabetes and unintentional injuries are ranked among the top five causes of death in addition to cancer, heart disease and stroke.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- The rates of gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV/AIDS are higher for African Americans than other minority groups and the overall state population. Note: This comparison excludes Native Americans. Due to the small population of Native Americans in RI, the available statistics for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS are too insignificant to report accurately.
- Asians and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of tuberculosis. There were no known cases of tuberculosis among Native Americans in 2003.

*2004 Minority Health Fact Sheets prepared by:*

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# MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

- The overall state population has better maternal and child health outcomes than the racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Fewer Native American mothers receive prenatal care than the overall state population.
- More Hispanic teens give birth than other minority groups and the overall state population.
- Native Americans have the highest percentage of births by mothers who have less than 12 years of education.
- African Americans have the highest percentage of infants with low birth weight. More African American babies die before their first birthday than other minority groups and the overall state population.
- Native Americans have the highest percentage of children living in poverty as compared to other minority groups and the overall state population.
- More African American children have elevated blood lead levels than other minority groups and the overall state population.

**Table E: Indicators of Maternal and Child Health**

	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/LATINO	STATE
Percent of pregnant women with delayed prenatal care*	17.2	15.8	15.2	12.9	9.1
Rate of births to teens ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens)*	+	74.7	42.9	86.9	33.1
Percent of births to mothers with less than 12 years of education*	34.0	22.0	17.0	33.0	15.0
Percent of infants with low birth weight (<5.5 lbs)*	10.7	11.8	9.3	7.3	7.5
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)**	9.7	14.3	8.4	7.8	6.6
Percent of children in poverty (<18 yrs)***	51.0	38.0	26.0	47.0	17.0
Percent of children under age 6 with high lead levels (≥10 ug/dL)****	+	18.0	12.0	10.0	7.0

SOURCES: \*RI Dept. of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database.  
 \*\* Infant Mortality Database, 1998-2002.  
 \*\*\* U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.  
 \*\*\*\* RI Dept. of Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention. Program based on highest lead test result during calendar year 2002.  
 +Data too small for meaningful analysis.



# ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- Fewer Hispanic adults have health insurance than other minority populations and the overall state population.
- Fewer Asian and Pacific Islanders have an ongoing source of healthcare and more report their usual source of care as none or emergency room than other minority populations and the overall state population.
- More Hispanic women reported having had a pap test in the past 2 years than women in any other minority population and the state’s adult female population as a whole.
- More African American adults reported being unable to afford a doctor at some point in time than adults in other minority populations and the overall state population.
- Numbers were too small to draw any statistically significant conclusion regarding Native Americans and access to healthcare.

Table F: Indicators of Access to Healthcare

	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	HISPANIC/ LATINO	STATE
Percent of adults less than 65 years old that report having no health insurance*	7.8	16.9	14.5	19.8	9.5
Percent of adults that report a specific source of on-going healthcare*	+	82.3	74.5	76.3	84.4
Percent of population (all ages) stating usual source of care as none or emergency room**	4.3	8.9	11.7	4.0	5.1
Percent of women aged 40+ that report receiving a mammogram in the past 2 yrs*	+	90.2	+	91.0	91.3
Percent of women that reported having a pap test in the past 2 yrs*	+	90.9	+	94.2	87.8
Percent of adults that said “yes” when asked if there was a time they could not afford to see a doctor**	10.5	16.2	8.0	6.9	7.1

SOURCES: \*RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2000-03, Healthy People 2010 (2000-03 frequencies).  
\*\*Health Interview Survey, 2001.  
+Data too small for meaningful analysis.

For more information regarding minority health and the statistics contained in this report, please contact:

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